



# Universities-Communities: strengthening cooperation

Erasmus+ project  
KA2 Capacity building  
in High Education

Dissemination Conference  
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# **Third mission through the eyes of internal and external stakeholders: Unicom project implementation results**

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# **Third mission of the Institute of Higher Education: insights of internal stakeholders**

Who are our communities?

- Ukrainian HEIs
  - HEIs' leadership and staff
  - National Academy of Educational Sciences
  - Ministry of Education and Sciences of Ukraine
  - National Agency for Quality Assurance
  - Other research institutions
- 
- Discussion about Kyiv City Pechersky District as our local community



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# **Third mission of the Institute of Higher Education: insights of internal stakeholders**

## Our Missions

- Overall mission:
  - to promote the development of Ukraine's higher education in accordance with national priorities and international standards through implementation of fundamental and applied research, provision of consultative services and expert support, as well as professional training of highly qualified academic staff for the government and higher education institutions
  - our social mission is the application of research results via interaction with Ukrainian HEIs, research institutions, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, National Agency for Quality Assurance of Ukraine, National Qualifications Agency, Verkhovna Rada Committee on Education, other stakeholders



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# Third mission of the Institute of Higher Education: insights of internal stakeholders

## Our Practices

- Socially responsible research
  - e.g. research project for 2021 – 2023 “Policies and Mechanisms for Implementation of University Social Responsibility in Ukraine”
- Focus on societal challenges and immediate needs under the martial law and post-war recovery of Ukraine
  - e.g. fundraising for armament and equipment for our colleague at the front
- Educational projects with international funding for displaced universities
  - EU project “Reinventing displaced universities: enhancing competitiveness, serving communities”
- Small self-financed projects, projects that do not require funding
  - e.g. planting trees to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Institute of Higher Education
  - e.g. “greening” the Institute (eco-friendly behavior, recycling, less waste, smaller electricity bills etc.)
- Limitations: financial and legal





# **Third mission of the Institute of Higher Education: insights of internal stakeholders**

## New Initiatives

- UNICOM project, other educational international projects
- Comprehensive consultations with stakeholders before and during implementation of research projects
- New research projects:
  - e.g. Facilitating cooperation between universities and labour market under martial law
  - e.g. Social inclusion in higher education
- Looking for new partners and stakeholders
  - e.g. CoARA - Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment
  - e.g. considering new partnership with Hostomel Community
- Signing agreements on closer cooperation with HEIs
- Open for cooperation





# **Third mission of the Institute of Higher Education: insights of internal stakeholders**

## Lessons Learned

- In general, the Institute of Higher Education staff is interested in university – community engagement and third university mission
- Different scholars, experts define third mission differently
  - e.g. achieving sustainable development goals, practicing university social responsibility, as responsible application of knowledge for societal improvement and problem solving etc.
- Barriers to boosting Institute of Higher Education third mission:
  - lack of resources: time and money
  - lack of stimuli, recognition, award
- Search for a unified definition of the third university mission



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# Focus-group discussion: external stakeholders' insights

## Composition of the group

- Representatives of Ukrainian HEOs, private and public, as well as displaced
- Representatives of University of Educational Management with the National Academy of Educational Sciences
- PhD students of the Institute of Higher Education
- Members of Coordination Council on Hostomel Community Revival, other NGOs

## Participation offline and online



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# Focus-group discussion: external stakeholders' insights

Opinions, definitions of third university mission:

- University activities beyond university walls
- Engagement, collaboration, dialogue
- University is an engine that should take responsibility and steer and lead social-economic development of a community, region, country
- Crosscutting nature of third university mission
- Third mission, because it is not legitimate, is lost between the first and second university missions



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# Focus-group discussion: external stakeholders' insights

Opinions on the role of universities:

- Universities are generators, creators of new values, innovative ideas
- Universities lead innovations and innovative development
- University are drivers of local and regional development, members of Task Forces, Working Groups, Steering Committees etc. (leaders, guru for passive and unskilled community administrations)
- Universities as inquirers, field researchers of communities, in communities for communities
- Universities as mediators between local communities and international partners
- NGOs established by HEIs is an additional convenient resource to establish and activate university –community engagement



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# Focus-group discussion: external stakeholders' insights

Patterns of university – community engagement

- “Ideal” triangle: authorities – university – community
- Developing an ecosystem for community development with HEIs at the heart of the system

Communities for HEIs are:

- partners for implementing student projects
- object of research, field trips
- platforms for testing new ideas and hypotheses, piloting concepts etc.
- placements for internships
- sources of inspirations
- providers of challenges

Expectations of communities:

- HEIs as
  - providers of knowledge services (trainings in project management, finance, greening business etc.)
  - researchers, analysts who help identify and solve problems
  - advisers, facilitators of international cooperation
  - social services for combatants, internally displaced etc.



# Focus-group discussion: external stakeholders' insights

Opinions on IHE third mission

- Institute of Higher Education as a platform for informing and integration of Ukrainian academic community
- Leader and unifier of university activists and academic leaders
- Provider of services and resources (trainings, programmes, textbooks, podcasts, videos etc.)
- Promoter of new ideas, conceptual frameworks, transformation patterns for higher education
- Communicator of research findings and advocate for transformations in higher education sector
- IHE's stakeholders are different depending on the type of project, activity:
  - HEIs, research institutes, NGOs, international partners, local and international donors, communities, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, other ministries and agencies



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# **Focus-group discussion: external stakeholders' insights**

## Recommendations

- It is important to build the bridges and establish regular communication between universities and communities
- University – community engagement should be legitimized via cooperation agreements, memoranda etc.
- Eco-systemic and integrative approach to university – community engagement is preferable (cooperation should unfold on strategic, operational, programme, project levels, including services and events)
- In university research, community focus is important: research of, for and in communities
- Third university mission does not require centralization as it has many foci and manifestations and different algorithms are applied for different stakeholders



# Major findings



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- Our current stakeholders want more:
  - activities, seminars and trainings, information, resources, analytical data, transformative ideas
- Many representatives of the focus group are interested to collaborate with us
- In general, most interlocutors consider that universities should partner and cooperate with communities:
  - for the benefit of communities
  - for the benefit of university students
  - for the benefit of university
- But there is confusion and incomprehension as to who and how should initiate university – community engagement in practice



# Future steps



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- Synergies with previous and future research projects
  - research on university social responsibility “feeds” UNICOM project
  - we expect significant contribution from UNICOM to our new research project on social inclusion in higher education
- Focus on stakeholders
  - we intend to rethink our relationship with stakeholders and build bridges with different groups of stakeholders, including communities, learners in vulnerable position, NGOs who advocate for human rights etc.
- Collaboration with other Erasmus+ Projects
  - adding social dimension to study programmes, university strategies, boosting community engagement for revival and reconstruction
- Expanding our community, disseminating and promoting our attainments
  - our research findings on the social role of higher education and HEIs, UNICOM ideas on third university mission are worthy attention on broader circles
  - focus on public responsibility is growing in Bologna (we can be pioneers in promoting it in Ukraine)



**Thank you for your attention!**

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